

BLACK FLAG SUPPLEMENT

NO. 1

SPAIN

This is the first in a series of *Black Flag Supplements*. It's about Spain mainly because that's where you'll find the largest anarch-syndicalist movement in the world today. The resurgence of anarcho-syndicalism in this country (after Franco died in 1975) also indirectly helped start or rebuild anarcho-syndicalist movements in places as far apart as Britain and Japan, America and Australia.

We hope to provide *Supplement No. 2* soon, providing our finances are up to it.

CONDITIONS IN SEGOVIA PRISON

THE PRISON'S STRUCTURE

The prison contains 3 galleries, a total of 80 cells and a population of 166. This gives an average of more than 2 people per cell. The building is more than 100 years old and looks really sinister (dark, old, filthy. . .). Each gallery has its own inner courtyard measuring only 25 by 10 metres. There are 65 inmates living in the first and third galleries.

Each cell accomodates 2 or 3 inmates and is 4 by 2.25 metres (9 metres square). The cells also have a window measuring 0.9 by 0.7 metres situated at a height of 2.1 metres. The glass window panes match the thickness of the wall (90 centimetres) making it difficult for daylight to enter. Therefore the lights inside the prison are kept switched on all day. There is no screen separating the lavatory from the rest of the cell, so you have to go to the lavatory in front of the other people in the cell. The inside of the prison hasn't been painted for several years and the walls are peeling and full of holes.

All the cells suffer badly from rising damp. It comes up from the ground into the walls of the cells on the ground floor and it comes in from the roof into cells on the first floor. The number of broken skylights and gutters is unbelievable and when it rains water easily gets into the galleries.

Needless to say, those parts of the jail used exclusively by the prison staff are in much better conditions: well painted, no dampness, well heated etc.

TREATMENT AND CLASSIFICATION

First of all, there is no Observation Team (Equipo de Observacion). This violates Clause 247 of Prison Rules which states: 'Qualified Teams of Specialists will carry out the tasks of observation, classification and treatment.' In reality we've only got one 'educator' who only answers questions related to judicial procedure or to a prisoner's progress.

There are a countless number of prisoners who have completed over three quarters of their sentence and are therefore eligible under the Penal Code, Clause 98, for a conditional liberty, yet they stay in jail because the prison's Managaing Board (Junta de Regimen) hasn't bothered to put the proper release procedure in motion.

Many prisoners are also entitled to leave the prison for a short length of time yet they also stay in prison because the Prison Tribunal only gives this permission to prisoners that the Managing Board approves of.

It should also be pointed out that instead of granting conditional liberty, leave permits, and any other benefits to prisoners who are entitled to them, the staff, guards and even the Governor himself encourages these prisoners to 'grass' (inform) on their fellow inmates in exchange for benefits they are entitled to. We can cite several specific incidents of this, with names and surnames, and are willing to do so if necessary. It is morally degrading to try and change a prisoner into an informer. This practice clearly violates the aim of prisoner reform forseen in Clause 1. of the Common Prison Law (Ley General Penitenciaria) and Clause 1. of the Prison Rules.

Prisoners on remand, sentenced prisoners, young prisoners, old prisoners, first,

second and third category prisoners are all mixed together. Prisoners aren't even separated according to the type of crime they are sentenced for. This practice violates the following Prison Rules:

Clause 14: *Strict Separation will be observed in prisons where Sentenced, remand prisoners and people under arrest are held.*

Clause 33 c: *Prisoners will be classified according to. . . the type of crime they have been charged with.*

On the other hand, unjust punishments meted out by the Managing Board are all too frequent. Punishment for those who fail to hear the morning Siren, oversleep, and miss roll call as a result are a common occurence. It's also not unknown for prisoners too ill to get up to be punished. Arbitrary punishment is also common, under the 'mis-use of an authorised object' rule. This practice creates an atmosphere of total insecurity and means you are liable to be punished solely depending on the mood of a jail officer. Punishment usually means at least 3 weekends in isolation where you can't smoke or buy anything from the prison 'co-op' store.

A small section of the prison, called the 'Open Regime', also exists and is restricted to Third Category prisoners, allowing them to leave the prison daily. Although this section is open to 10 people, only 2 inmates use it at present, despite the fact that there are several Third Category Prisoners in the prison, who are therefore denied access to something they are entitled to.

There are also 2 small electric cookers on which coffee can be heated and food left to be cooked. These cookers are bought by and maintained by the prisoners.

Cupboards and Bed Clothes: There are not enough cupboards to go around and many inmates have to make do with putting their clothes on the floor, under a bed or in a suitcase for months on end. The mattresses, pillows, sheets and quilts are all very old and filthy even though everyone knows there are new sheet s stored away.

School: The School is tiny (it's size is equivalent to 2 cells). There are 20 students studying UNED Courses (like Open University Courses) at the moment. They all study in a 'classroom' measuring 9 metres (ie. one cell size) without any windows.

Kitchen: The cooks are definitely not professional chefs; but they are prisoners on good terms with the Governor. The head cook, for example, is an ex-brick layer. You can imagine what people think about his cooking.

Co-op Store (Economato): The Co-op store doesn't have many useful things for sale and prices are ridiculously high. Its name (the 'Economato') has become the butt of many jokes.

Water: Little water comes out of the taps and the cells situated in the middle of the gallery frequently receive no running water.

Culture and Sport: The attitude of the Governor, Managing Board and guards towards inmates' cultural pursuits, apart

Permission for UNED (Open University) Students to study in the classroom is refused when the teacher doesn't turn up. More worrying is the recent circular sent to all prisons and signed by the Director General, reminding Governors of an inmate's right to reduce his/her sentence by studying — the only real way to achieve social rehabilitation. This right would, according to the circular, be applied retroactively and therefore take into account any education courses an inmate had taken over the last few years.

The circular is dated February 29, '84 and its reference number is 6.2.8—1,509. That circular is ignored in this prison because the Managing Board doesn't agree with it. They say 'if we put this circular into effect, several inmates would have to be released within a few days' and they go on to say this would 'put people out-

side the prison more at risk'.

The role of prison staff, they say, is to 'keep prisoners in prison for the maximum length of time' and that if they ever agreed to put the circular into effect, then 'the School would be full with people' (!) etc, etc. We believe these comments speak for themselves. The situation is so bad that UNED students recently decided to do their studying in the gallery courtyard, boycotting the School, in protest against the teacher's complicity with the Managing Board by failing to report irregularities committed by the Board to interfere in matters exclusively the responsibility of the teacher. Classes for students hoping to apply for UNED courses are given by fellow inmates without any help from the prison or UNED itself.

The only Sport you are allowed to play — with restrictions — is hand-ball, providing you don't mind paying 315 pesetas (around £1.50) per player for the privilege. We've spent six years trying to get football nets into the prison, without success.

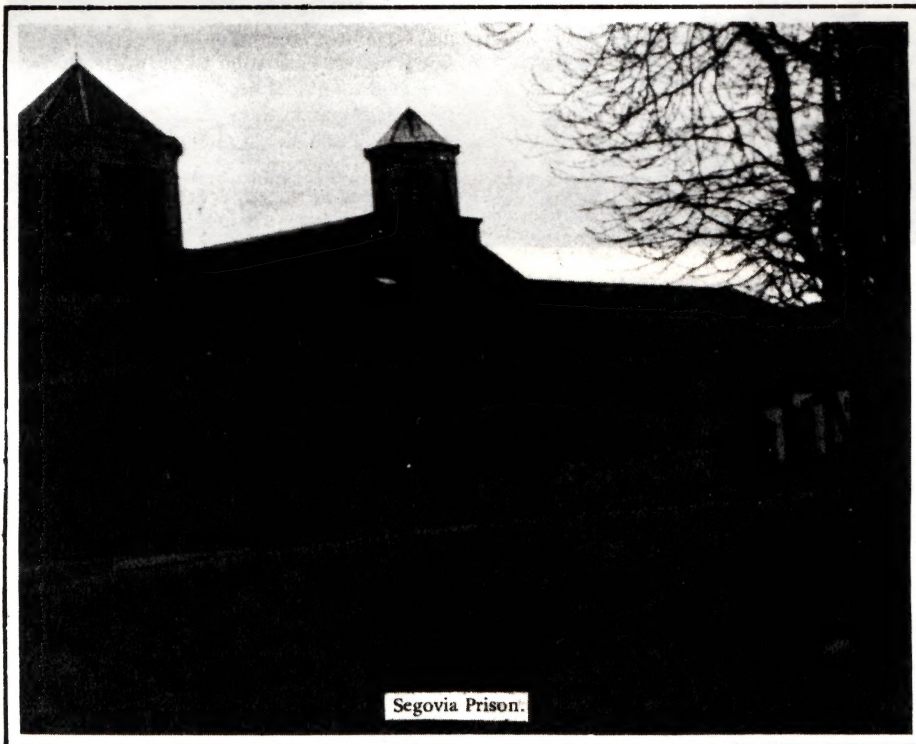
They brought several board games into the prison last September, during a public holiday. You had to ask the guards for permission every time you wanted to play a game and return the board to the guard on duty when you had finished the game. Despite these precautions, boards soon disappeared — it later turned out that a guard had taken them home for his children!

Health and Hygiene: The prison is covered in filth, which isn't surprising when you realise that they only give us 2 bottles of disinfectant, and one packet of detergent to clean a whole gallery. . . for a week!

The dining room — as mentioned above — is a real mess, full of shit and with one bucket for a dustbin. Every time we remove the bucket and put it in the court yard — it's presence in the dining room constitutes a health hazard, especially in the summer when its surrounded by mosquitoes — the prison administration have ordered us to take it back to the dining room.

The showers are really filthy too. There are no tiles on the walls (again for 'security reasons') and all the paint on the walls has been washed off with moss growing in its place, in several corners.

Its really amazing that no typhus epidemic has broken out yet (this will come eventually, especially in the summer).



Segovia Prison.

SUBSTRUCTURE

Showers: There are 3 showers on the first gallery heated by a 50 litre capacity electric heater. There are 65 inmates on this gallery and the heater is completely useless. The hot water runs out after 3-4 people have taken a shower.

Dining Room: The dining room is a cave and it is a joke to think it was meant to be anything else. You can't fit more than 25 chairs in the room, yet there are 65 inmates on this gallery alone. The majority of prisoners eat in their cells.

from the School activities already mentioned above, is one of total boycott, this is justified under the excuse of 'prison security'. In fact they deliberately block all access to culture so that they can continue acting in a completely arbitrary way. For example, radio-cassette machines are allowed by the Director General of Prison Institutions for all those who are studying, yet the Governor of this prison forbids us from plugging in these same machines, even though he knows they can't operate properly on batteries.

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE CNT-AIT IN CATALONIA

Although he didn't know much about me he was happy to answer as many of the questions I could put to him, though even then there were plenty left over which I'd like to ask, but I thought that three hours was long enough. He was also very busy, constantly shouting down a (red & black) telephone: a hotel room had to be booked for Frederica Montseny, someone had to be sent to open a meeting hall, an affiliate from Madrid who was just out of prison had to be helped. We managed though. The text, though condensed, is approved by him.

MT: What is the CNT-AIT doing now in Catalonia?

GS: We've got two premises, which Franco's vertical unions took over from us after the war, occupied (squatted), one in Badalona and the other in Igualada. We also have other buildings belonging to the historical patrimony occupied. One each in Terrassa, Manresa and Rubi, and two in Sabadell. Also in March this year we organised a series of meetings and debates over a two week period in Barcelona to which 3-4,000 people went. 1,500 came to the first one alone when Frederica Montseny spoke.

In April we organised cultural weeks in Badalona, Monistrol, Prat, Hospitalet Santa Coloma and Barcelona.

For May Day we held a meeting and a demonstration in a civic centre in North West Barcelona, the Cotxeres de Sants. 5,000 people came and the theme was a 'Century of the State Against the Workers - 1886-1985, referring to the anniversary of the rigged trial and execution of five Chicago Anarchists last century.

A bit of general information for you: the present Comite Regional consists of 14 county federations (Catalonia is divided into *comarques*, small counties) 17 local federations and 60 union branches. Our would-be rivals, the 'CNT de Catalunya' (NB a strangely lucrative 'split' from the CNT-AIT, examined in a two part article The 'CNT-C' in the fortnightly *Black Flag* newsbulletin) have got, you might be interested to know, exactly one federation and one set of premises.

Our main concern at the moment here is to recover the workers inheritance. The authorities agree on paper that the distribution of the historical possessions of the organisations which had their premises seized by Franco had been unfair to the CNT-AIT, but they refuse to hand our heritage over because they claim there are 'two CNTs' even though according to the constitution no split from a given organisation can use that organisation's initials, as has the 'CNT-de Catalunya'. There's another problem too: in order to qualify for the return of the assets, every union has to have at least 15% representation in the factory committees (NB committees of union members who negotiate with the boss on behalf of the workers. MT). If we participated in the committees we'd actually have rather more than 15%, but we refuse to have anything to do with them: they're a Francoist invention and opposed to worker's interests - they make real worker's control impossible.

But the authorities use our abstention as another excuse for not returning the legacy we lost.

MT: Would you say that the CNT-AIT has more influence in Catalonia than in

other parts of Spain?

GS: Ouf! Easily. . . 40% of CNT-AIT membership is in Catalonia. In Catalonia we have most influence in the following sectors: The SEAT car factories; mining in Sallent, Suria, Berga and Belsareny; sanitation; catering; and recently, with a lot of people coming over to us over the last few weeks, in the textile industry.

MT: How do you see the future of the CNT-AIT in Catalonia?

GS: Well, we're getting back on our feet. The period of the split, in 1979, was confusing but now we've reopened branches in all the areas which went over to the split; also, lots of new branches are being opened outside Barcelona. In 1986 we think we'll have around 10,000 affiliates (we currently have 3,500). The situation in Catalonia what you might call the social perspective, is now absolutely ideal for our ideas and our proposals. 2 weeks ago we got 30 new affiliates working for RENFE (Spanish railways), who came over to us from the CCOO (Communist union) and that kind of transfer from the other unions is happening more and more frequently, as people see that neither the UGT socialist union) or the CCOO can help them in the present crisis. Up in Bilbao and Gijon (the Basque area of

government, the police. If that sounds far-fetched, read the Scala dossier in the January 1980 issue of the independent Catalan magazine *Canigo* among other sources, MT.) That brought a lot of pressure on the CNT and a lot of police harassment. Also around the same time, the police began a campaign directed exclusively against our organisation. Every six months, almost to the day, they would round up a few of the CNT-AIT members at random on a trumped up excuse and put them in jail. Everyone in this room has been in jail. They'd all be let off, but not before spending up to a year in jail on remand. That frightened a lot of people off.

MT: I can imagine. So, at any rate, you feel optimistic about the CNT's future in Catalonia?

GS: Oh yes, definitely. Workers are now becoming aware that PSOE's aims (the PSOE is the Spanish socialist party, now in power) are to achieve the complete bureaucratisation of the unions. . .

MT: As has happened in England.

GS: Exactly. We offer the only alternative to that situation.

MT: What connection does the CNT-AIT have with other libertarian groups, say squatters, if any?

GS: Well squatting a place to live is very

meetings in March this year those two Athenaeums not only boycotted them, but organised their own meetings on exactly the same subjects and at exactly the same times. Nonetheless more people from those same Athenaeums came to our meetings than went to the ones set up by the CNT de Catalunya factions in those Athenaeums.

MT: You say Gracia is on the side of the CNT de Catalunya. That was the Athenaeum which gave support to the squatters.

GS: Quite. Going back to the squatters, that's another problem; it's not only that they're not a serious movement, it's that, well-meaning though they are, they're being manipulated a bit, in my opinion, by the CNT de Catalunya.

MT: I've talked to quite a lot of people - ordinary people, not people born with silver spoons in their mouths - about the CNT: it's a subject I always bring up if the conversation gets around to politics. I almost always get the same reaction: 'Well, they've got some interesting ideas, but they're hispaniolist, they're anti-Catalan'. I remind them that if the CNT's ideas about devolution were put into practice they'd make Jordi Pujol (the president of Catalonia's autonomous government) look like a died-in-the-wool centralist. They point out to me that all the CNT propaganda on the walls is in Castilian and cite that as proof for their opinion. And it's true, you are the only political organisation in Catalonia, apart from the far right, who don't print in Catalan or at least in both languages. Why's that?

GS: Here we are very clear about the language question. We are internationalists, and here in Catalonia although a lot of people speak Catalan, everybody, without exception, speaks Castilian. If more people spoke English we'd print in English, and so on. What we really want to promote is Esperanto. That is our ideal as regards the language question. Many affiliates here have learnt Esperanto.

MT: So you print in Castilian because it's more international than Catalan?

GS: That's right.

MT: One last question: what kind of help would you most appreciate from the British anarchist movement?

GS: Books and magazines are always welcome, indeed communication of any kind. But what we really want, to put it bluntly, is money. Large numbers of our militants are unemployed - and that's a big problem as regards financing the CNT! In fact it's SOS - please write that down - SOS! We need money badly for prisoners' aid above all. There are currently about 40 anarchists in jail. We ask for a monthly contribution from affiliates of 200 pesetas of which 25 go to the prisoners' aid committee. Every month, we send 4,000 pesetas to each prisoner. Money also goes towards the *Soli* (*Solidaridad Obrera*, the Comite Regional's paper), and to the CNT in exile, in Toulouse. To prepare for May Day we've started selling a kind of CNT bond, at 500 pesetas each, an idea which works quite well.

MT: It's been a long interview. Thank you very much indeed.

GS: Not at all. . .



Northern Spain), where there's been all the trouble due to the reconversion programme, the CNT-AIT's been getting lots of new members from the UGT, which kow-tows to the government all the time. Oh yes, one piece of information which is very important: the CNT-AIT has more branches than any other union in Spain, 290 in all.

Our main work now is to recover the number of affiliates we had in 1979. Then we had 150,000.

MT: That's something I've been meaning to ask you: why did the number of affiliates decrease so rapidly and in such a relatively short time? From 150,000 to 3,500?

SG: Fear. First there was the Scala case (NB. in which five CNT-AIT members were accused of firebombing a famous Barcelona nightclub, an accusation which has not only now been proved false, but which was made by the very people who in fact had organised the bombing: the

difficult here. We occupy our premises and have been evicted violently recently! Some people have tried to copy the Amsterdam model here, but it's not the same here alas so the squatters remain very small and already have a place to live to fall back on.

MT: I read in the papers that the squats got support from the local Libertarian Athenaeum. What are the Libertarian Athenaeums and what connections do you have with them?

GS: They're libertarian centres/meeting places. After Franco died, around those years, there were 37. Now there are only three. They claim to be independent, but in fact we can prove that two of them have contacts with the CNT de Catalunya.

MT: There's one near where I live in Poble Sec.

GS: Poble Sec is with us. But the other two, in Gracia and Sant Adria, have people in them who were expelled from the CNT-AIT. When we organised our

Above I've given the Secretary's answers just as he gave them. This doesn't mean, and he would be the first to stress the point, that they're gospel. In earlier conversations, other CNT affiliates gave different answers to the questions concerning the enormous loss of membership after 1979 and the language question. Briefly, regarding the former they said that an important factor was that a lot of people left because they'd joined for more or less superficial reasons - fashion, disillusion with Catalanism, and so on. Thousands left to join the ecology/health food groups, others went into Yoga and all that, and a lot simply drowned in the wave of *pesotisme* which swept Barcelona for the first time around 1980 (*pesotisme* is a widespread and cynical fuck-everything-and-get-on-with-living attitude). About the language question, which is important in Catalonia

(in fact five people have just been jailed for changing the signs in the main railway station from Spanish to Catalan - and at the protest demonstration later police kicked down stalls selling books in Catalan and beat up onlookers) the CNT seems to be less than clear. Many affiliates took a different line from that of the secretary, saying for example that there was no need to speak Spanish in Catalonia (I speak only Catalan and that was what prompted the comment). But on the other hand a Catalan-speaking friend told me of an argument he had with a CNT affiliate who, despite the fact that Catalan was his first language too and would therefore have actually been easier to speak to my friend in, insisted on talking Spanish, presumably for 'internationalist' reasons. The language question is by no means divisive, but the CNT clearly aren't unanimous about it. As I

said, while not being the most important issue for the CNT, it's one that has affected their acceptance here in recent years and in my opinion needs to be discussed more. But more on that in a later article.

I'd never spent so long in the CNT-AIT offices before, and got an idea of both the atmosphere and the scope of their activity, just from sitting there. I think anyone would have got the same impression: that this was a *serious* organisation; not that they all walk around like they've just lost a sixpence and found a half-penny, far from it, but serious inasmuch as what they do is practical and on the whole successful (even with their relatively small membership, no boss in Catalonia likes to lock horns with the CNT); it is also, given the obstacles, police pressure and top level interference, something extraordinary in Europe. A horizontal union run with no paid officials, bureaucrats

but by and for the members. (I left feeling fairly optimistic).

M.T. May 1985 Barcelona, Spain.



PUIG ANTICH AND THE ILM

Ten years ago, despite an international outcry, Franco had Salvador Puig Antich, member of the Iberian Liberation Movement, executed. Several movements claimed he had died in their cause: the left wing hailed him as 'anti-Francoist', the Catalanists as a 'young Catalan', the libertarians as an 'anarchist'. But what was the ILM exactly?

Left wingers in Barcelona refused to follow the suggestions of the ILM Solidarity Committee that there should be a mass demonstration in support of Puig Antich on the eve of his execution. Instead they contented themselves with placing a wreath on his tomb two days later, praising him as a militant anti-Francoist. On the other hand, the Spanish police had for long written off the ILM as 'common bank-robbers'. The ILM were in fact hunted down by the criminal section of the Spanish police. So were they gangsters or revolutionaries, Puig Antich and his friends?

THE WORKERS MOVEMENT IN BARCELONA

In 1970, three distinct groups established contact and began to set up a small network:

- A certain 'Workers' Group', members of the clandestine (communist) unions who were opposed to 'Stalinist manipulation by their own bureaucrats' and also had no wish to form an authoritarian vanguard in any other left-wing movement.

- A 'Theoretical Group', which published a clandestine pamphlet called the *Worker's Movement in Barcelona* in 1970.

- An Outside Group, based in Toulouse, who reprinted the above mentioned pamphlet in offset. (A 'deluxe' version!) There was a mass strike among the employees of Harry Walker, owner of a steel foundry, in late 1970/early 71. This brought the three groups together and led, after the strike, to the formation of the *Autonomous Workers Groups (AWG)*.

The AWG began by producing (in Toulouse) a series of leaflets, one of them entitled 'Boycott Union Elections' (referring to Franco's artificial unions). This latter cause some split in the AWG because those in the 'Worker's Group' believed that some kind of tactical voting was necessary in those elections. An idea which the 'Theoretical Group' disagreed with. The latter now began to produce and sign their own pamphlets as the Iberian Liberation Movement. In June 72 the ILM declared that it had formed a guerilla group, working in tandem with its own propaganda section. The guerillas called themselves the *Autonomous Combat Groups: ACG*

EXPROPRIATION

On the night of August the 15th, 1972 the ACG broke into a printing materials factory in Toulouse and nicked machinery to the value of 76,000 francs (7,500 quid). This action was interesting because the machinery stolen, discovered by the police on the 9th of September (along with arms caches and bundles of bank-notes), and then returned to its owners, was nicked again on the 13th of Dec. The affair led to the arrest of Salvador Puig Antich, Oriol Sole Sugranyes and Jean Claude Torres. In March 1973 they were all condemned to between 6 and 12 months imprisonment.

Meanwhile in early 73, there was a series of hold-ups in Barcelona. Over a period of a few months thirty of these had been attributed to a mysterious 'Sten-gun band', (robbery totalling 24 Million pesetas). Every banking business got two police guards and the Press concentrated on condemning the 6 savages responsible, while avidly printing their communiques.

The ACG also involved themselves in more provocative political actions. They fired guns off outside a bank which was housed underneath the Barcelona HQ of the *Brigado-Politico Social* (Franco's Special Branch). They also made mistakes — holding up a bank (Jan 27-73) which had already been robbed 8 days earlier; and shooting a bank clerk who tried to press the alarm button during a raid on March 2nd of the same year.

Nonetheless, after that month of March, the ILM had to cope with several divisions in its own ranks due to the increasing division between the theorists and the activists. The old 'Theoretical Group' hadn't published anything new for a while, and when the first issue of the new ILM magazine (C.I.A.) appeared, it became clear that the Armed Combat Groups had control over most of the areas involved in the production of the magazine: printing, smuggling, false papers, finance. It became clear that the theorists would not defend the actions undertaken by the ACG. A Congress was held in March, which reached no concrete solution to these disagreements. By September, the theorists and the 'military' wing of the ILM had split completely. The 'Guerillas' re-organised themselves by themselves. But on the 29th June a certain incident made some of them vulnerable to the authorities.

After having met Francesc Paituvi and a woman called Pilar in a Barcelona bar, Salvador Puig Antich left that bar with them but left his bag there. By the time he returned, the barman had already phoned the police. The latter thus found: a pistol, a telegram from Toulouse, 85,000 pesetas, a PO box number, a rent book, and (the jackpot)

SALVADOR PUIG ANTICH



a bundle of false papers containing photographs of certain members of the ACG. One of the police recognised one of these members as being a member of his own family! However the recognised man, Josep Pons Llobet, was arrested three months later, and in different circumstances.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Once again, an ACG member staged a deliberately provocative raid. To 'celebrate' a bank raid done on September 15-1972 in Bellver de Cerdanya (Spain) he returned there with two companions and robbed the same bank on September 15-1973. They got away with 580,000 pesetas, but the alarm system had been updated and the police were on the scene fast. Two of the gang, including Josep Pons Llobet, were arrested on the 17th. The third, Jordi Sole, escaped to Belgium.

On the 18th, the police arrested Pons Llobet's companion, Maria Fernandez. Over the next four days they arrested other ACG members; one of them, Santiago Amigo, who was ill and more susceptible to interrogation, confessed that he had an important rendezvous with two other ACG members on the 25th. The police arrested those two, Francesc Paituvi and Salvador Puig Antich, but not until two scuffles had taken place. After the first, in which shots were fired, police disarmed them, but Salvador Antich produced a second gun and there was more fighting: Deputy Inspector Anguas Barragan was mortally wounded, Puig Antich, who was wounded in the head and shoulder-blade, went to hospital.

The Inspector's death remains a mystery. The doctors in the hospital to which he was rushed claim he was hit five times by bullets. The police immediately took the corpse for a summary post mortem in a local station, and declared that the Inspector had been shot only three times and that all the bullets were from Puig Antich's gun. Antich was sentenced to death, charged with the bank raid on March 2nd, in which the clerk had been shot, and with the murder of the police inspector.

SOLIDARITY AND REPRESSION

Only in Barcelona, not anywhere else in the Spanish State, was a solidarity committee for the ILM prisoners set up. The members of the committee consisted largely of ILM 'survivors' and the other libertarian groups were suspicious of it, seeing it as an attempt by the ILM simply to recruit new members and organise new actions. Most anarchists in Spain were involved in rebuilding the CNT, and they had no wish to share the publicity of the ILM solidarity committee. While the committee was finding it so difficult to mobilise support, ETA carried out their successful assassination attempt on Franco's right hand man, Admiral Carrero Blanco. That finished any chances Puig Antich might have had of having his death sentence commuted. There were demonstrations all over Catalonia for his release, graffiti was plastered over Francoist war memorials, banks and police stations, and two members of the ILM were arrested in Paris trying to hijack an *Iberia* plane. Meanwhile heads of State and various organisations around the world protested his imminent execution. Franco was enraged by Blanco's death, however, and gave the order on the first of March, at ten O'clock in the evening, Puig Antich was garrotted the next day.

Julien Dreux

(adapted and translated from AGORA magazine)

POSTSCRIPT: WAS THE ILM ANARCHIST?

Puig Antich ended his prison letters: 'Salud y Anarquia' and all ILM tracts confirmed that the group believed in 'libertarian communism'. Certainly the police had no doubts. They might have called the ILM 'bank-robbers' when they were chasing them, but when they were caught they became 'a major anarchist urban guerilla movement' and elsewhere, a 'Catalan anarchist group'. While I was translating the above I became aware that the writer clearly thought of the ILM as a sort of dilettante organisation, an opinion shared by some CNTers. In fact Puig Antich belonged to a new radical wave which was surfacing in Barcelona, and which was trying to do without the more traditional organisations. The writer of the above doesn't point out that Puig Antich was active as a Catalanist as well as an Anarchist — in fact he combined the two beliefs, believing that a loose federation allowing full cultural independence to all the 'nations' within Spain, was the answer. In this he followed Kropotkin and also the ideas of Pi Margall. Just as ETA had combined Basque nationalism with Marxism, so Puig Antich wished to combine Catalan nationalism with Anarchism. A cousin of mine was in jail with Puig Antich the weeks before he was garrotted. Puig Antich taught him Catalan there... my friend told me, when I spoke to him in 1978, that Puig Antich was extraordinarily brave, in that he never allowed the authorities the pleasure of seeing him in despair, on the contrary... He was serious about his beliefs. No dilettantism there...

The Translator.



1985



MAY DAY

Cases of crab louse, venereal disease, tuberculosis etc. have occurred without isolating those infected, therefore increasing the risks of contamination.

The responsibility for the health of the prisoners clearly lies at the feet of the prison doctor yet — like the teacher — he is manipulated by the dictates of the Governors and fails to properly carry out his duties, in violation of clause 288 of the Prison Rules. He doesn't even properly examine prisoners entering the prison. He just asks them if they are well or not and then lets them in, putting everyone's health at risk. Things have got so bad that now the prison administration decides when a sick prisoner should stop taking the special diets prescribed by the doctor.

Given the unhealthy conditions described above, it's no surprise to find cells plagued with bugs, especially in summer, when the bites of these parasites keep you awake all night and give you a rash all over your body.

Other matters: Visitor's booths have no chairs available for inmates (although there are chairs available on the visitor's side of the booth) and you have to shout to be understood, as it's impossible to hear what's being said with several visits going on at the same time. (We can verify this, after visiting there! Editors.)

There's a room allocated for more intimate visits (called 'vis a vis') but there are no windows in this room and it's as filthy as the rest of the building. During these visits, families and inmates alike are forced to suffer humiliating strip searches. Refusal to be stripped

results in no visits and can be punishable by isolation.

Relatives are subject to strip searches for 'security reasons' in violation of Clause 76, part 9 of the Prison Rules which says that searches 'will be carried out with regard to the dignity of the person being searched'. There's a metal detector and X-ray machine available but they're never used and we can only conclude from this that searches are carried out so as to cause maximum offence.

Irregularities with mail happen all the time. Letters have been opened, read and resealed, leaving traces of glue around the envelope flaps, on many occasions. On other occasions, the interference with mail is even more obvious. One example is the case of an inmate who was handed a letter by the Teacher, already opened. When the inmate asked why the letter had been opened he was told that the Governor of the prison had ordered the letter to be censored before being passed on to him. The inmate pointed out that it was illegal to censor letters and the Teacher admitted this. Since then the Teacher has refused to censor letters, although it still goes on today. We can give names and surnames here if necessary. On another occasion, an inmate saw a guard put a letter in his pocket with the intention of opening it, reading it and resealing it, to then pass it on to the inmate or making it 'disappear'. This was all reported to the Governor.

Letters written by inmates and addressed to inmates must not be sealed as they are read by the Governor in accordance

with Prison Rules. However, these letters are often also read by any guard who happens to be bored or just wants something to do. This violates a recent circular sent to all prisons informing those involved that the censoring of mail, letters between inmates, is the sole responsibility of the Governor of the prison.

Newspapers and magazines freely available outside the prison have been censored on several occasions. This does not mean just political or union literature but includes magazines like *Tiempo* (The Times) which has been forbidden in the past. For example, one issue of this magazine contained a report on the death of Agustin Rueda Sierra, an anarchist who was imprisoned in Carabanchel. This happened only six or seven months ago. This is also illegal, violating the General Prison Rules and Prison Rules (Clauses 58 and 179 respectively).

We have been without a messenger (who runs errands etc.) for three months now. He's responsible for picking up our mail from the post box in town. This duty is therefore being carried out by the messenger from the Re-habilitation of Alcoholics Annex (part of the prison). He brings our letters and parcels very irregularly, and any food we receive through the post goes rotten before we get it. The registration of parcels is done without inmates being present, allowing parcels to go astray or encouraging guards to play tricks on the inmates. For example, one inmate received a parcel with a saw blade in it, planted there by a guard who wanted to

frame him. A portion of 'hashish' was also put in one parcel. The guards quite obviously wanted to catch inmates with these things in their possession and then punish them accordingly.

Conclusion: Well, that's more or less the situation in Segovia prison in 1984/'85; although there's enough happening here to enable you to write a book or two!

The above was written by inmates of Segovia Prison.



SABATE

SABATE: GUERRILLA EXTRAORDINARY by Antonio Tellez.

Originally published by Rupert Hart Davis (translated by Stuart Christie in HMP Brixton during the 18 months Angry Brigade trial), and then by Cienfuegos, and out of print for some years, Sabate's biography has been republished as a paperback by Elephant Books, the first of a series of Anarchist Pocketbooks, in association with Refract.

Refract are going on to publish the biography of Servino di Giovanni, by Osvaldo Bayer — the story of the Argentine resistance between 1923 and 1931 (which is reflected in the film: *Rebellion in Patagonia*, a video of this may be available this year).

This unabridged paperback is compact and a delight to handle and we look forward to more under the Elephant imprint.

The book is £2.95 plus postage, and is available from *Black Flag* or usual bookshops and distributors, or BM/Refract London WC1, or from BM/Elephant London WC1V3XX.

THE RESISTANCE, & NOW Thoughts after Sabate.

'Everyone' knows all about the Spanish civil war; — like the International Brigade was the greatest army that has existed since Connolly grouped 10,000 Irishmen in the Dublin Post Office and they all held out to the last and lived to tell the tale in every pub in the English-speaking world, or either the great military leader George Orwell said this, or else seven million priests were killed defending the faith against barbarous hordes. . . . When one tries to say otherwise one is met not by any facts — nothing in this realm belongs to fact — but by yawns, anyway, that was fifty years ago.

From the Anarchist point of view it is obviously of importance to know that prior to 1936 an important section of the Spanish working class organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines, put free communism into practice in many areas, struggled against the State with almost impossible odds loaded against them, and also faced many problems such as we have today, not the least of which was a struggle within the Libertarian movement between activism and quietism, and between revolutionism and populism.

In 1936 all these conflicts came out, as well as the essential truths as to whether anarchism was possible, whether workers could really control their own factories, and also the conflict between workers who wanted revolution, and those who took advantage of the situation to slip into positions of power.

While scholars have dealt endlessly with the Spanish war, and occasionally even with the revolution, almost none have dealt with the resistance that came after.

Asked last year for books in English about post-war Resistance, I could only think of two *Sabate: Guerrilla Extraordinary* by Antonio Tellez, and *Franco's Prisoner* by Miguel Garcia — both of which we had a hand in and both of which then were out of print! The trots with their grip on academia, have a total blank on the Resistance period, and the quietist libertarians follow them: V. Richards, author of *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* reviewing *Franco's Prisoner* in *Freedom* said: 'Though it is quite clear that these activities would



not bring down the regime, that there was some kind of resistance to Franco's police State must have been a source of encouragement to some of its enemies, though it is equally clear that very few were inspired to take to the mountains. The history of the Spanish revolutionary movement does in fact show that the kind of resistance presented to successive regimes was precisely what inspired the workers to have the courage to organise against genocidal repression which finally reached the point of having to be restrained for fear of not leaving enough workers to carry on the country.

When Durruti was organising an incredible frontal attack on the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (and Largo Caballero entered the government so as to gain an advantage for the socialist UGT over the CNT), it was the CNT that got the support of the majority of the workers, not the UGT, and they were prepared to struggle for their union

in a way no orthodox trade unionists ever did for the whole period of dominant European fascism. This comes out very clearly in the film, *The Short Summer of Anarchy* — a documentary on the life of Durruti, the English version of which should be available for showing soon.

The Sabate Brothers

There were four Sabate brothers and a sister — the younger brother and the sister took no part in their activities; as they were children, indeed Manuel, who did take part, was only nine when the civil war began — Francisco ('el Quico') was the best known; but Jose was a good fighter too (a friend of Miguel Garcia by the way). Francisco succeeded in the title of Public Enemy No. 1 for the fascist regime.

Sabate, or Sabater (whether you prefer the Catalan or Castilian version) became a legendary lone fighter; but there were a great deal more, some surviving until the last few years and some still around.

But also, during the civil war many libertarians were quietly abandoning the revolutionary struggle, while taking part in the war, and slipping gradually into the various echelons of government. For years a militant working class had prevented a bureaucracy growing up in the CNT, their own movement; but individual militants were gradually being incorporated into the government bureaucracy. The movement, which had grown up on individual responsibility and frequent congresses, found itself faced with entry into the government by people not elected by them as delegates, entering by invitation of the defeated Generalitat of Catalonia in the first place, and gaining acceptance only by a personality cult or 'star system', never seen before as a threat.

While this was taking place, people like Sabate, the Libertarian Youth in particular, were fighting back not only at the fascist enemy but the rising dictatorship within the anti-Fascist ranks. This represented the one last hope of the Spanish revolutionaries during the war, and so it did in the period of repression afterwards.

People like Sabate — the whole of the Resistance fighters, indeed — came into their own with the relentless struggle against the Franco conquest. Miguel Garcia tells how they flooded Spain with escaping prisoners and refugees, in order to compromise the regime no less than for its own sake. Sabate concentrated on the urban military struggle, which was the only way of getting the grip of the hangman off the workers' collar (sometimes not metaphorically either), and Tellez, in telling the story, explains why it was that neither repression nor the conspiracy of silence could wipe out all memory of Anarchism.

But what helped to kill off the Resistance was the quietist conquest of the organisation, treasuring and invoking memories of the Revolution and the deeds of the civil war and of the former organisation. They determined not to enter into illegality afterwards, and try appealing to a non-existent international conscience to change the regime in Spain, as a reward for their carrying on an illegal resistance in France during the war when it was legal — by international Law, if more perilous — to do so! That was what was challenged by Sabate, Faceras and all the other fighters, and it was that which occasioned the real rift in the CNT to which all these adhered to their deaths.

Had the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement only considered the implications of both traditions at the time. Had it realised that the traditional revolutionary anarchism exemplified by groups like the International First of May was what built the pool in which the labour organisation could swim. There would never have been the present system, where the movement has been penetrated and up for grabs by people who would never have dared enter a CNT hall in the old days — whether nats, trots or Catholic Action.

The blame lies firmly in the 'official' organisation of the post-Franco Exile period, moulded as it was not by the fighting CNT of pre-war or the revolution but by the compromises made in the civil war and necessitated by the exile movement existence. When, under the nomenclature of the 'Libertarian Movement' it was neither fighting nor an industrial force, but a shaky compromise keeping together activists and quietists and politicians. This was the real split in the Spanish movement and what prevented it getting off the mark in the post-Franco period with a working class which had faced the holocaust, but was ready to respond with activism — just as the French working class responded to acts of mass terror by the State after the fall of the Paris Commune with individual terrorism — as it was then called — which led to the great period of revolutionary syndicalism as confidence was restored.

The sad price paid by the Organisation for its compromises with the State, and the bows to the French police by attacking Sabate when he died, is the present condition of the Spanish movement, with divisions and splits amounting to separate CNTs but not offering a clear-cut division between revolutionary activism and quietism but enabling reformism and political infiltration to flourish; the 'renewers' having started by criticising the reformists and then becoming more reformist themselves.

Albert Meltzer.